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THE TOWN.

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NUMBER I.

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Parve . . . . . sine me, Liber, ubi in URBEM:
(Hei mihi!) quo domino non licet ire tuo.
Vade.— OVID.

WITHOUT issuing a Prospectus, or soliciting a Subscription, this paper is sent, an adventurer, into the world, where it must meet, for itself, every chance of favour and of fortune. An adventurer let it be, and an unfortunate one, if it must be so; but it shall fight rather than beg its way; and, be its merits great or small, these shall be the sole amount of its pretensions.

As to a subscription-list, if only its established use be adverted to, its rejection may require apology; but, if its inconveniences are taken into the account, not a word can be necessary. It is proverbial that there are two classes of bad pay-masters; those who pay beforehand, and those who never pay at all; and, to one or the other of these, most subscribers belong. In fine, subscription is an occasion of so much reciprocal complaints, between publishers and readers, and these complaints on both sides, have so much real foundation, that the Publisher of THE TOWN has determined on making the experiment (bold, perhaps, but laudable) of proceeding in the mode universal throughout Europe; that of fixing a price upon each paper, to be paid at the time of delivery, and at which it may be separately purchased. He enters into a ready-money trade; he brings his commodity into the market, not by sample only, but in bulk; he deals openly, and with no conditions unfulfilled; it is cash for goods, and goods for cash.

But, a bolder experiment still, is involved in the Editor's attempt. Not content to follow the steps of those who visit the world but one day in the week with their labours, he will presume to print THE TOWN on *three;* that is, on every *Tuesday*, *Thursday*, and *Saturday*.—It may be proper to mention here, that he proposes to limit the period of publication to the *winter* months.

Not, however, in printing three papers in each week, consists the jet of the experiment. To find readers is the point;—*hic labor, hoc opus est.* It is to find, amid the cares of commerce, and the strife of political party, any numerous body of readers, of such a paper as THE TOWN.

And what sort of a paper is THE TOWN?—In truth this is a very excusable question, considering that the reader has not yet turned over the first side!

The TOWN, then, is a paper in which, except for this once more, neither politics nor commerce are ever to be mentioned. These are topics of very necessary and very rational discussion; but to which it is of the first importance to society to set some bounds;—and, what is more, to oppose some antidote. They are sordid and sour; full of meanness and gall. The cup of life has need of other ingredients, the human character of other foundations;—science, literature and fashion: it is these, and the two latter more especially, that remove from society the asperities, by which, without them, it is inevitably deformed.

It was thus that the SPECTATOR accomplished so much, not only for England, but, according to the testimony of French and other writers of the continent, for all Europe. In England, it opened to the politician, the trader, the fox-hunter, the fop, the sensualist and the idler, new sources of conversation and enjoyment; it awoke the thoughtless, purified the debauchee, stung folly, refined the rustic, elevated the merchant, and softened political controversy: in the rest of Europe, if the spirit of party had less need of subjugation, it reduced, in the same degree, that of fanaticism.—The truth is, that men must have something to talk of; and that the dearth of other objects multiplies fanatics and politicians.

But a commercial city is the constant mark of literary opprobium. Against it, every poet vents his curse.—There, it is said, the love of gold is every thing, and the muses nothing. Is this necessarily so? What is the natural operation of wealth, if not to produce that ease, in the midst of which alone a taste for literature and the arts can be indulged? Besides, the commercial cities of America are not exactly in the circumstances of the provincial capitals of Europe. They are, in point of fact, the capitals of their respective states. New-York is a metropolis, and it ought to exhibit a metropolitan advancement in taste.—At all events, the experiment is to be made, whether a paper devoted to literature, to the arts and to what is elegant in society, may not discover friends in the city of New-York.

Yet, a further particular remains; and this is, its frequent publication. Here, something, that will appear satisfactory, may perhaps be offered. Let us recur to the history of periodical papers. What were they, as originally conducted, but frequent, and in some instances daily publications? Their form was light, and they appeared often. They were not considered as parts of extensive works, but as disconnected sheets, which, like true ephemerides, began and ended with the day. It was

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the reader's partiality alone that preserved them, and bound them into volumes.

This primitive design, in the present instance, it is intended to follow. The Town is a single and an open sheet, published with reference to the moment; and, like the moments, quick in succession, and easily run through. Its final destiny will be in the hands of the public.

Frequence of publication is also essential to the leading purpose of this paper. A little above, something is said of *printing the Town;* and it is, in truth, the *town* that it is proposed to print. What the *town* produces, and what the *town* offers for observation, will occupy a principal share of attention; though, as it is the object, not only to *print the town*, but *for the town*, other views will occasionally obtain.

Among the topics to be derived from *the town*, the Criticism of the Stage will never be disregarded. Every species of elegant public amusement will receive similar attention.

The remainder of the paper will be occupied by poetry, and by miscellaneous literature in general, and by scientific and literary information.—After this detail, it can scarcely be necessary to add, that we hope for the suffrages of Female readers.

Such is the project with which this paper commences the New-year.—Alas! what projects, what hopes, what resolutions without number, are formed for the new-year, not by the editor of a periodical paper only, nor by *the town*, but by the whole world! and, of these, how many must fail, and how many will be broken and abandoned! Gentle reader! may they be neither yours nor ours; and, in one wide wish, for our neighbours and for ourselves, May THE TOWN be prosperous!

THE THEATRE.

ON Monday Evening last, the Tragedy of *Macbeth* was presented, to an overflowing house. The established reputation of this great drama, and the extraordinary and well-known merit of Mr. Cooper's performance, might sufficiently account for the interest manifested by the public; but it is not to be doubted that Mr. Morse's *Macduff* was also a foremost object of expectation.

Macbeth is a composition, in which, with poetical beauties of the highest class, is joined the forcible inculcation of important truths; a composition always delightful to the auditor, and always valuable to society.

That part of the fable, which depends on the agency of witches and their familiars, may appear to savour more of a daring imagination than of moral utility. To do it justice, we must take into our consideration the state of public opinion, at the era in which it was written; and, this done, we shall perhaps be inclined to set down, in its behalf, rather less on the score of imagination, and rather more on that of morality. When Shakspeare wrote, the doctrines of witchcraft and demonology were in full credit; and, of their pernicious influence upon mankind, the story of Macbeth is a grand and impressive illustration. This truth is presented under two aspects; first as it refers to society, and secondly, as it refers to individuals, the tools or the dupes of pretenders to divination. As it respects society, witchcraft is marked as the parent of murder, treason and public desolation; as it respects individuals, as deceiving those who trust in it.

But, the abhorrence of witchcraft, is a sentiment which, however useful, in the days of Shakespeare, it might be, it may seem, in this age, of no importance to inculcate.—To those who know the incurable attachment of mankind to superstition, and the sum of its actual existence, this matter must appear in a very different light.

Some persons may imagine, that the abhorrence of murder is, in like manner, a sentiment which needs not to be excited and kept alive; and it must be under this impression that there are those who argue for the benefit of exposing, on the stage, the vices of more refined society, to the exclusion of that of a crime of so foul and unequivocal a character as murder.—Here, too, we differ: the history of polished life itself, sufficiently testifies, that men still require to be deterred, even from murder.—We shall allow ourselves only to add, that, *Macbeth* is a play of the very highest value, regarded as addressing itself to all classes, and alike popular in the fable and in its conduct; and that, in the witches, &c. it has a machinery truly epic; a machinery, which is not only (as criticism requires that it should be) *marvellous;* but, we repeat it, *moral.*

The performance, on Monday evening, was distinguished by many particulars of which we can speak in terms of merited applause. Mr. Cooper, as to his part, would be entitled to almost every eulogium we could pronounce; and, in what relates to his management, there was much to praise. We looked in vain for Mr. Holland's *grand gothic scene;* and the absence, of this specimen of the talents of so truly eminent a scene-painter, was, to us, a grievous disappointment. The scene-*shifting* at the New-York theatre is more excellent than those, who have witnessed no other, can have reason to believe; but the scene-*painting* is often as vile. It is more particularly in forest scenery that this stage is deficient, and in which it exhibits only the very lowest productions of the art. On this head, however, we are led to be satisfied, that the liberality of the manager will speedily remove every occasion of complaint; and we rejoice to find, even from the broken promise of this evening, that it is from Mr. Holland's pencil that we are to expect the improvement. Mr. Holland's landscape is excellent; but, in his interiors of gothic buildings, he is inestimable.

The dresses and decorations deserve commendation. *Lady Macbeth's* petticoat displayed little taste; but with this exception, her dress was elegant and rich. The regal habit of *Macbeth* unites brilliance of effect with historical truth. The additional witch-scene, in which *Hecate* departs on a cloud, was given with good effect, though not the best that may be wished for. The apparitions of the armed head, &c. have seldom been better executed; but, of all the particulars respecting the *getting up* of this tragedy, none afforded us more satisfaction than the 'moving wood.' The appearance was admirable.

Of the merits of Mr. Cooper's *Macbeth*, we have already expressed a general opinion. We regard this character as a chef-d'œuvre of Mr. Cooper's powers. In the second act, his first, second and third scenes, including his agitation before the murder, and his anguish after it, may be safely reckoned among the finest exhibitions of the art. No auditor can be insensible to his

—Methought I heard a voice cry,
Sleep no more, &c.

Mr. Cooper's defects consist in a disregard of rhythm, an occasional lapse into unmeaning rant, and an indefensible attempt to *enact* his words; as, when, at such a word as *murder* he rises to the very top of his compass; and, at such a one as *peace*, he instantly sinks into the very softest *piano*. It was thus that, in the celebrated soliloquy in the last scene of the first act, he completely tore a passion to tatters. Some parts of this speech were delivered well; particularly the words—*with his surcease, success;*—but, when Mr. Cooper had the ill luck to come to

> —then, as his host,
> Who should against his *murderer shut the door*,

he *roared* as if, like *Bottom*, he had been ambitious that the *Duke* should say, *Let him roar again! let him roar again!**

To relieve us, however, from this alarum, which was certainly done 'too terribly,' Mr. Cooper immediately makes the boldest transition; and his—*Besides, this Duncan hath borne his faculties so meek*—is given in truly Lydian measures.—'I will aggravate my voice so,' says *Bottom*, 'that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; 'I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.'

But, again, 'for 'tis nothing but roaring,' it very unhappily occurs, that the words *trumpet* and *damnation* almost directly follow. Here, Mr. Cooper actually indulged himself in so much extravagance, that he lost both voice and memory; and we are greatly deceived, if the entrance of *Lady Macbeth* was not a most seasonable relief. He forgot, or had not voice to utter (for he could hardly have designed to omit) the fine imagery of—

> And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heav'n's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> Till tears shall drown the wind.

We cannot compliment Mr. Morse, on his *Macduff*. His emphasis is sometimes wrong, and his action wants chastening. On the discovery of *Duncan's* murder, it must be confessed that he hallooed manfully. Here, however, the *bell* was a rival candidate for praise; and we are scarcely prepared to say, to which we give the preference. His grief, on the loss of his wife and children, was not expressed to our satisfaction.

Mrs. Villiers has enough of the 'undaunted mettle' of *Lady Macbeth;* but, in the other requisites, as dignity, &c. she is deficient. In particular instances, nevertheless, she was happy; as, in her 'What do you mean?' There is something, which comports but little with the solemnity of tragedy, in the long train, of which she is under the necessity of taking so much care, when she visits the king's chamber, to carry the daggers.—Blood appears to be held cheap by the property-man. We should have seen no hyperbole in the phrase, had it been Mrs. Villiers' cue to ask,

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand?

or, to reply,

> —No; this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green-one red;

but, very ill-timed indeed was the observation,

> A *little* water clears us of this deed.

* Midsummer's Night's Dream.

On the whole, when we think of Mrs. Villiers' pretty 'pickers and stealers,' and Mr. Cooper's daggers, so neatly and so plentifully dipped, each to the same height, we cordially enter into the spirit of Lady Macbeth's somnambulant remark, 'Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him!'

In reading the letter, Mrs. V. falls into the common error, of displaying that degree of emotion, in voice and gesture, which is natural only when we are giving utterance to our own thoughts or sentiments, or professedly imitating the manner of another. In her reply,

> A foolish thought, to say a *sorry* sight,

she seems not to understand, that *sorry* here signifies *sad*. We presume that she interprets it, *a sight to cause repentance;* but the meaning is, *a sight sad or melancholy*. Lady Macbeth says that this is a foolish thought, because, in her estimation, the sight is joyful.

In the after piece, *'Tis all a Farce*, Mr. Twaits' *Numps* was irresistibly comic; but Mr. Shapter mistook silliness for humour.

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MR. MORSE'S PIERRE.

Venice Preserved, one of the most elegant tragedies in any language, was played yesterday evening, to an almost empty house; but the state of the weather may sufficiently account for its *cold* reception. Mr. Cooper's *Jaffier* is not his best performance. Mrs. Darley, in *Belvidera*, is sometimes an interesting little girl; but she is confessedly unqualified for this walk of the drama. She is not without tenderness; but the mind requires more than this, in

> The daughter of a senator of Venice.

Of this fourth appearance of Mr. Morse, in the character of *Pierre*, we shall speak in but few words. His general conception is good; but, were we to follow him through all his ill-delivered passages, the length of our criticism would at least equal that of the play. Exclusively of faults of this nature, we observe in this gentleman the following: 1. He gives to the letter *r*, a harsh guttural sound; 2. He is defective in the management of his hands; 3. In a placid temper, he accompanies every word with an absurd smile; and, 4. In his starts of passion, he is deplorably unfortunate. These defects, it is probable, will not be thought of, either by this gentleman, or his friends, as incurable; and we sincerely wish him every success. For the rest, in the ear of an actor so new to the boards, it may be no unfriendly part to relate a theatrical anecdote, which his situation calls to our memory. On the second night of the confederacy, Mrs. Clive called Miss Pope into the green-room, before her going on the stage as Corinna, and said to her, 'My dear Pope, you played particularly well on Saturday night, as a young actress:—now, take from me a piece of advice, which I would have every performer atttend to. You acted with great and deserved approbation; but to night you must endeavour to act better, and expect to receive less applause; for, if you let your young heart be too sanguine, and rest on the caprice of public praise, and find yourself disappointed, you will foolishly let it damp your spirits, and you will sink beneath yourself:—therefore, take my advice, for your proceeding on the stage. The violent thunder of applause, last Saturday, on your first appearance, was not all deserved; it was only benevolently bestowed, to give you the pleasing

information, that they were well delighted, and had their warmest wishes that you would hereafter merit the kindness bestowed on you.'

MADAME & MISS DESEZE'S CONCERT & BALL.

On the evening of Tuesday sennight, Madame and Miss Deseze gave a Concert and Ball, at Little's elegant room, Mechanic Hall.

Although the evening was rainy and tempestuous, a numerous and fashionable company assembled at an early hour.

The first piece which particularly attracted notice, was a Sonata by Madame Deseze on the Harp; which was executed with much neatness of finger. This was followed by an Italian song, by the same lady, with an accompaniment on the same instrument, which was much admired and loudly applauded: but admiration and applause were still more loudly and with still more justice bestowed on her last song, with orchestra accompaniments. The Duet, on the harp, by Madame Deseze, and Forte-Piano by Miss Deseze, though both long, and in some passages intricate and difficult, was remarkably well performed; if we consider the extreme youth of Miss Deseze, we might be justified in calling it extraordinary. We are not extremely partial to that species of composition known as *concertos*, but that given on this occasion, composed, if we may judge from the style, by Viotti, and executed with ability by Mr. Nicolas, afforded us much pleasure.

After the Concert, came the Ball, as it was called in the Biils, but under whose direction, did not, as we recollect, appear, nor was it to be discovered. Being fond of seeing good dancing, we lingered among the numerous lookers-on.

Instead of the gentlemen present taking seats, and leaving the floor to be occupied by the dancers, what was our surprise to find them dividing themselves into three clusters, and forming three rings, as is customary in England, at boxing matches; only, that the inner row did not (and, for those behind, the more the pity) sit or kneel on the floor. These rings were about three deep; the second and third tier standing on tiptoe, and thrusting their heads in, between those immediately before them, to get a peep at the feet of the dancers, who were cooped up, and confined in a manner that left some of the gentlemen (lately from Paris) not a quarter room enough to do their latest Parisian steps in, without grievously annoying their lovely partners, by the extended leg and foot, before, and behind, and sideways, and round about, as the case happened to be; for it is to be observed, that this new style of dancing consists in having the legs any where but under the body, and this is thought to be very fine; though, for ourselves, we confess we think it more calculated for the stage than the ball-room.

Of the spectators, who were not fortunate enough to squeeze into the circles that encompassed the dancers, we might say, with Peter Pindar, (with a slight alteration)

> Upon a chair were some, and some upon a bench.

While this sort of thing was going forward in the room below, a mulatto fiddler in the orchestra above, kept bawling aloud to the ladies and gentlemen dancers, and fiddling as he bawled, "Right and left!—four hands round!—chassez!—ballancez!" &c. which, to an European, and one not yet accustomed to the manners of the Town, had, we must confess, an air rather ludicrous.

Not being extremely entertained with the ball, and its genteel management, we retired at an early hour.

LONDON FEMALE FASHIONS,

FOR NOVEMBER.

Dresses.—A frock of French cambric, trimmed all round with lace; the sleeves full, and fastened up at the bottom with a broach.—Swansdown tippet.—A small dress hat of sarsenet.—A dress of plain or worked muslin; the front made quite straight over the bosom, and confined with medallions or broaches; the sleeves made full on the top, and the bottom looped with a slider.—Cap of white lace; ornamented flowers.—A large scarf-shawl.—White gloves and shoes.

Morning Walking Dresses.—A morning dress of plain muslin, made high over the neck, and trimmed all round with a frill of double muslin; long sleeves, trimmed round the bottom. Cap of muslin, with lace border, ornamented with a bunch of roses in front. A train-dress of plain muslin, with a spencer of purple sarsenet, trimmed round the bottom with deep lace. A small round bonnet, to correspond with the spencer. Black shoes.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

There is, in the following lines, an unaffected diction, and smoothness of versification, for which, amid the mass of fugitive poetry, we often look in vain.

TO *****.

Oh 'twas a night to mem'ry dear!
Fondly she loves to trace it o'er—
Soft murm'ring on th' attentive ear,
The gentle billows kiss'd the shore:

The hum of careful day was past,
Lone silence held her tranquil reign;
Save where, beside the pond'rous mast,
The seaman pour'd his untaught strain.

The rising moon, full orb'd and bright,
Shone o'er the rolling wave, so clear;
So chaste, so pure, its lovely light
We fancied Heav'n within its sphere!

The flutt'ring breeze, with frag'rant wings,
Swept from our cheeks the tender tear;
The tear from sentiment that springs,
That drop to feeling hearts so dear!

Borne on that breeze, so sweet, so mild,
The soul of music floating came;
Notes, which might sooth Despair's lorn child,
Or, light devotion's hallow'd flame!

Such was that night!—dost thou, like me,
Recal the scene, with soft regret?
Lives, in thine ear, that minstrelsy?
And, in thine eye, those moonbeams yet?

Say, thou, whom I shall ne'er forget,
Dost thou, like me revere the hour?
When Nature, Taste and Friendship met,
And all our souls confess'd their pow'r?

CLARA.

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